

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4691

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL FLORENCE

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

AMCONSUL GENOA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: KOHL VISIT STRENGTHENS CDU-DC TIES

REF: ROME 7882

SUMMARY: TWO DAYS OF TALKS BETWEEN CDU PRESIDENT KOHL AND ALL MAJOR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (DC) LEADERS APPEAR TO HAVE STRENGTHENED OPERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTIES. IN AN OFF-THE-CUFF ASIDE TO THE GERMAN PRESS, KOHL REPORTEDLY SAID HE HAD COME TO ROME "VERY WORRIED" ABOUT THE DC'S POSITION IN THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS (INTER ALIA, WITH THE PCI) FOR A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD, BUT IS RETURNING TO BONN "WITH MUCH CONFIDENCE". KOHL SPOKE OUT STRONGLY AGAINST THE DANGERS OF EURO-COMMUNISM WHICH HE SAID COULD LEAD TO A "FRACTURING" OF EUROPE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH. NOTING THE "IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS," THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE SPECIFIES THAT

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A HIGH-LEVEL BILATERAL WORKING GROUP WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO IMPROVE "TECHNICAL-ORGANIZATIONAL COOPERATIONS" AND THAT DC LEADERS ZACCAGNINI AND MORO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO BONN. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING HIS TWO-DAY VISIT TO ROME, MAY 15-16, CDU PRESIDENT KOHL MET WITH ALL OF THE DC'S MAJOR LEADERS

AND PAID CALLS ON PRESIDENT LEONE AND POPE PAUL. KOHL SAW MORO, ZACCAGNINI, ANDREOTTI, FANFANI, PICCOLI, BARTOLOMEI, RUMOR AND FORALNI. HE WAS "PROFOUNDLY IMPRESSED BY THE UNANIMITY OF VIEWS" EXPRESSED BY THE DC LEADERS ON THE PARTY'S POSITION TOWARD THE PCI. KOHL HAD EVIDENTLY COME TO ROME "VERY WORRIED" ABOUT THE CURRENT PHASE OF INTER-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD, BUT SAID HE LEFT ROME WITH "RESPECT" FOR THE DC'S "DECISIONS" AND "FULL CONFIDENCE" IN THE ABILITY OF THE DC LEADERS TO REMAIN UNITED AND TRUE TO THEIR IDEALS.

2. KOHL'S VISIT SEEMS TO HAVE STRENGTHENED THE OPERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES WHICH HE DESCRIBED, THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT, AND "REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF THE SAME PARTY" (THE POPULAR EUROPEAN PARTY). THE TWO PARTIES WILL COORDINATE THEIR POSITIONS CLOSELY ON EUROPEAN QUESTIONS, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO THE PLANNED 1978 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS IN LINE WITH THE TINDEMANS REPORT. THE DC'S PRESS RELEASE ADDRESSES THE NEED TO TAKE THESE INITIATIVES IN "CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH THE US ON THE BASIS OF THE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS CONVINCINGLY REVIVED." COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE HAD HEARD THAT THE COMMUNIQUE WOULD EXPRESS THE OPPOSITION OF THE TWO PARTIES TO DIRECT GOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT AND COMMUNIST PARTIES (REFTEL), THE COMMUNIQUE AVOIDED ANY EXPLICIT MENTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THIS POLITICALLY DELICATE ISSUE. END COMMENT.

3. SPECIFICALLY, THE TWO PARTIES AGREED TO ESTABLISH A HIGH-LEVEL BILATERAL WORKING GROUP (HEADED ON THE DCU SIDE BY SECRETARY-GENERAL GEISSLERWHO IS TO VISIT ITLAY SOON) TO INCREASE "TECHNICAL-ORGANIZATIONAL

COOPERATION." DC SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI AND DC PRESIDENT MORO WERE INVITED TO PAY VISITS TO BONN. THE TWO PARTIES WILL ALSO CLOSELY COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DC GASPERI, ADENAUER, AND SCHUMANN FOUNDATIONS.

4. ALTHOUGH THE KOHL VISIT RECEIVED SCANT PRESS PLAY WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS, PORTIONS OF HIS PRESS INTERVIEW ON THE RISKS OF EURO-COMMUNISM WERE TELEVISED. KOHL USED THAT OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK "VERY FRANKLY" ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING A "FRACTURE" BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE. HE SAID THAT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EURO-COMMUNISTS'

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES WOULD THREATEN
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY BY PRODUCING JUST SUCH A GEOGRAPHIC
DIVISION. KOHL ARGUED THAT THE "LATIN-
EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS" HAD NOT RENOUNCED THE FUNDAMENTAL
RPINCIPLES OF COMMUNISM AND THAT ON BERLIN AND MAY
OTHER ISSUES REMAINED FAITHFUL TO MOSCOW'S LINE.
GARDNER

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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